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SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/A - T. REOTT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/22/2019

TAGS: PREL MOPS NATO AF CA

SUBJECT: CANADA ON RECONCILIATION OF AFGHAN INSURGENTS

Classified By: A/PolMinCouns Kurt van der Walde,
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) officials want to coordinate with State Department counterparts on the development of a plan for the reconciliation of Afghan insurgents. In particular, the Canadians would like to hear current U.S. thinking on security, status, monitoring, UNSCR 1267 implementation, and unified messaging with respect to potential "reconcilees." DFAIT officials want to discuss the matter before the G-8 meeting in Trieste. End summary.

¶2. (C) On June 22, DFAIT Afghanistan Task Force (FTAG) Deputy Director for Counterinsurgency and Security Niall Cronin briefed pol/mil officer on Canadian thinking about potential reconciliation of insurgents in Afghanistan. Cronin asked for State Department feedback this week, before special envoys meet to discuss the matter on the margins of the G-8 meeting in Trieste, June 25-27.

¶3. (C) Cronin recounted an informal meeting Canada hosted in Washington on May 14 where Canada, the UK, the U.S. (DOD only), Australia, and the Netherlands, as well as a representative from UNAMA, discussed the development of a "contact and facilitation plan" for allies to deal with potential reconcilees. There was agreement at the meeting that the ongoing influx of U.S. troops into RC-S likely would lead to a "burst of requests" for reconciliation, he said. It would be important, he observed, for allies to adopt the same general principles for dealing with opponents seeking to quit the fight:

-- authorities must have the means to assure former insurgents' security and status. Assurances for an insurgent leader who leads 200 men away from the insurgency would be different than those made to a single fighter defecting from an insurgent force, Cronin added;

-- authorities must have the capability to monitor former insurgent leaders and fighters to ensure that they do not directly or indirectly support, or rejoin, the insurgency;

-- allies must agree on how to implement UNSCR 1267 with respect to former insurgents;

-- allies and the Afghan authorities should agree to a single, unified message to promote the defection of "reconcilable" insurgents to the government side. Even subtle differences in messages would sow confusion and undermine the effort, he warned.

¶4. (C) Cronin said that some partners had opposed the creation of a reconciliation plan, asserting at a March meeting of Regional Command-South (RC-S) partners that the time was not right, or that reconciliation should be Afghan-led. Cronin noted that Canada, the U.S., and the UK

had countered that allies needed to be ready with an agreed plan "for when the time was right to engage insurgents seeking to quit the fight." He commented that the main take-away from the subsequent May 14 meeting was that key partners in RC-S are close to agreement on how best to address the matter in a way that respects allied redlines. The only discordant note sounded among allies during the session, he observed, was a British Embassy Kabul initiative to drop the requirement that acceptance of the Afghan constitution be a precondition to reconciliation. According to Cronin, that particular view was not shared by British officials in London.

¶15. (C) Action request: Cronin emphasized that Canada would like to benefit from the State Department's current thinking on reconciliation before special envoys meet to discuss the Qon reconciliation before special envoys meet to discuss the matter in Trieste. Embassy Ottawa requests SCA subject matter experts engage Cronin upon receipt of this message.

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